

1 AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

2 The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the  
3 application.

4 Listing of Claims:

5  
6 Claims 1 through 11(Canceled)

7 12. (New) A device including:

8 (a) a shaft having at least one flexible portion along its length between a proximal end  
9 and a distal end;

10 (b) at least two longitudinally bendable pulling and/or pushing elements, the at least  
11 two pulling and/or pushing elements each extending to the proximal end of the  
12 shaft and each acting on the shaft in an axial direction of the shaft at locations  
13 spaced apart from the proximal end of the shaft further than at least part of the at  
14 least one flexible portion; and

15 (c) a fixing device located in a fixed position with respect to the shaft adjacent to the  
16 proximal end of the shaft, the fixing device having each of the at least two pulling  
17 and/or pushing elements extending there through, and being adapted to reside  
18 alternatively in a releasing position in which the pulling and/or pushing elements  
19 are unsecured to the fixing device and are substantially free to move axially there  
20 through, or a locking position in which each pulling and/or pushing element is  
21 fixed in place with respect to the fixing device.

22  
23 13. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein the shaft comprises a leaf spring having a ring-  
24 shaped cross-section.

1 14. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein each pulling and/or pushing element comprises a  
2 rope which is substantially rigid in its longitudinal direction.

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4 15. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein each pulling and/or pushing element is received  
5 within a respective guide element within the shaft so as to be slidable longitudinally with  
6 respect to the respective guide element.

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8 16. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein the pulling and/or pushing elements are mounted  
9 in the shaft at an inner circumference of the shaft.

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11 *Abt* 17. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein each pulling and/or pushing element acts upon the  
12 shaft in such a way that it is limited to pulling and pushing directions for the respective  
13 pulling and/or pushing element.

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15 18. (New) The device of Claim 12 further including two lateral guides extending  
16 longitudinally inside the shaft on opposite sides thereof, each lateral guide being fixed to  
17 the shaft along at least a portion of the length of the respective lateral guide.

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19 19. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein the shaft includes an interior longitudinal channel.

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21 20. (New) The device of Claim 19 further including an optical light guide or an optical image  
22 guide extending within the channel.

1 21. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein the pulling and/or pushing elements are arranged  
2 in pairs with each pulling and/or pushing element in a respective pair engaging the shaft  
3 in the axial direction at substantially the same distance from the proximal end of the shaft.  
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5 22. (New) The device of Claim 12 wherein the pulling and/or pushing elements are arranged  
6 symmetrically about the shaft.  
7

8 23. (New) A device including:

9 (a) a shaft having at least one flexible portion along its length between a proximal end  
10 and a distal end;

11 (b) at least two longitudinally bendable pulling and/or pushing elements, the at least  
12 two pulling and/or pushing elements each extending to the proximal end of the  
13 shaft and each acting on the shaft in an axial direction of the shaft at locations  
14 spaced apart from the proximal end of the shaft; and

15 (c) a fixing device located at or adjacent to the proximal end of the shaft, the fixing  
16 device in a releasing position enabling the pulling and/or pushing elements to  
17 move axially there through to enable the shaft to be bent to a desired shape, and  
18 the fixing device in the locking position locking the pushing and/or pushing  
19 elements in place with respect to the fixing device to retain the shaft in the desired  
20 shape.  
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22 24. (New) The device of Claim 23 wherein the shaft comprises a leaf spring having a ring-  
23 shaped cross-section.  
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2 25. (New) The device of Claim 23 wherein each pulling and/or pushing element is received  
3 within a respective guide element within the shaft so as to be slidable longitudinally with  
4 respect to the respective guide element.

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6 26. (New) The device of Claim 23 further including two lateral guides extending  
7 longitudinally inside the shaft on opposite sides thereof, each lateral guide being fixed to  
8 the shaft along at least a portion of the length of the respective lateral guide.

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10 27. (New) The device of Claim 23 wherein the shaft includes an interior longitudinal channel.  
11 *Ab*

12 28. (New) A method for operating an endoscope-type device having a shaft with at least one  
13 flexible portion along its length between a proximal end and a distal end and at least two  
14 longitudinally bendable pulling and/or pushing elements, the at least two pulling and/or  
15 pushing elements each extending to the proximal end of the shaft and each acting on the  
16 shaft in an axial direction of the shaft at locations spaced apart from the proximal end of  
17 the shaft, the method including the steps of:

18 (a) placing the at least two pulling and/or pushing elements in a condition in which  
19 they are freely movable axially at the proximal end of the shaft and bending the  
20 shaft to a desired longitudinally bent shape;

21 (b) with the shaft in the desired bent shape, placing the at least two pulling and/or  
22 pushing elements in a condition in which they are in a fixed position prevented  
23 from moving axially at the proximal end of the shaft to fix the shaft in the desired  
24 bent shape;

- 1 (c) inserting the shaft into an inserted position in an orifice while the at least two  
2 pulling and/or pushing elements are in the fixed position fixing the shaft in the  
3 desired bent shape;  
4 (d) with the shaft in the inserted position, placing the at least two pulling and/or  
5 pushing elements in the condition in which they are freely movable axially at the  
6 proximal end of the shaft; and  
7 (e) moving the shaft from the inserted position in the orifice while the at least two  
8 pulling and/or pushing elements are in the condition in which they are freely  
9 movable axially at the proximal end of the shaft.  
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11 29. The method of Claim 28 wherein the step of moving the shaft from the inserted position  
12 in the orifice includes adjusting the position of the shaft to a different bent shape and  
13 further including the steps of:

- 14 (a) again placing the at least two pulling and/or pushing elements in the condition in  
15 which they are prevented from moving axially at the proximal end of the shaft to  
16 fix the shaft in the different bent shape;  
17 (b) adjusting the position of the shaft in the orifice to an adjusted position;  
18 (c) again placing the at least two pulling and/or pushing elements in the condition in  
19 which they are freely movable axially at the proximal end of the shaft; and  
20 (d) entirely withdrawing the shaft from the orifice while the at least two pulling  
21 and/or pushing elements are in the condition in which they are freely movable  
22 axially at the proximal end of the shaft.  
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